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The Rug and the Color Scheme

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The Rug and the Color Scheme

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The Rug and the Color Scheme

A Room in the Making

By Agnes Rowe Fairman

WHSOEVER coined that useful phrase, "the right thing in the right place," crowded into a nutshell the art of the well-furnished home. For it is not the cash-value, or even the beauty of a thing, in itself, which matters so much as whether it belongs as an harmonious detail in the scheme of the room as a whole.

In other words, when we start to plan a room we must first learn that all values are relative; that the effect of anything, and therefore its beauty, will depend upon something else—to some extent upon everything else which goes into the decoration of the room in question; that it is not the individual merits of its individual furnishings which count for most, but the value of each thing *in its relation* to the things you see it *with* and the background you see it *against*.

Of course, when we can start fresh from the beginning with a room, or with the nucleus of a few good things around which to build a scheme of decoration, it is comparatively easy thus to make every selection of its furnishings accord with every other. But even though quite another matter to make over a room with the handicap of old things to be used, no end of mistakes could be saved if only we would keep clearly in mind *ensemble* effects, instead of rushing out,

as do the ninety-and-nine, to buy the wall-paper that is "so perfectly charming," "so stunning," or "so smart," the "fascinating chintz," and the rug with the "wonderful coloring," or "so rich in design."

To begin with, remember that every detail of a room must be either a part of its background scheme or a part of its ornamentation. We usually find one-third background to two-thirds of the decorative idea, when, alas, it ought to be just the other way round. The average room is like many an ill-conceived dress, overburdened with trimming. But the clever decorator, like the true modiste, understands the effective use of a little decoration on a background which will show it off to best advantage. So perhaps the first of all questions to determine in furnishing a room is how much background will be necessary, and how neutral in color, to offset the decorations planned.

First the Question of a Right Background

EVERYBODY knows that the background of a room begins with its ceiling and walls; the thing that everyone does not know is where it should end. And a very important point which is generally overlooked is the fact that the floor, too, must always be considered part of the background. When there is much decoration introduced by furniture coverings and Oriental rugs, the background should also include portieres and window hangings. In such cases the best way to keep the draperies of a room quiet and inconspicuous—in order to avoid confusion of idea—is to make them of the same color as the walls. But at least the floor, as part of the shell of a room, must be treated to conform with the background idea, either by the use of a large carpet, or rug, which carries the wall-color in a heavier tone, or by a decorative rug laid on the back-



THE use of green rugs in a room flooded with the yellow gold of sunlight gives a delightful effect, the mellow tone of the one softening and brightening the other, while, on the other hand, the green offers a rest for the eye from the brightness of "all outdoors" pouring in through the windows.

In the charming sun-parlor here shown, the furniture has been stained a gray-green, and even the upholstery kept in key with the floor-covering and the plants, whose bright and varied colors have been depended upon to give the touch of contrast to a closely unified scheme.

BLUE, belonging as it does to the receding colors, the restful, quiet tones, must ever be a favorite for bedrooms. In the room here pictured the flat gray-blue of the walls is agreeably taken up by the deeper blue of the floor-covering, while just enough warm, aggressive color to relieve the monotony of the background is introduced in the orange-red flowers of the chintz hangings and the orange silk candle shades. It is on this introduction of enough, but not too much, contrasting color that much of the success of a color scheme depends.



ground of a dark wood floor. One or more small Oriental rugs, fairly glowing with color, may even be laid on a larger plain rug, exactly as the ornament of a picture is hung upon a plain wall. When a large, rich Oriental carpet is used as floor-covering, it may be balanced and offset by the richness of upholstery fabrics and other things in a luxurious room, so that it lies unobtrusively on the floor, in accordance with the precepts of good taste, despite its grandeur and cost. But where the decoration of any rug *with pronounced design* practically covers a floor—and sometimes this exception to our “floor-as-a-background” rule is allowable—then, since ornament cannot be piled upon ornament, the majority of pieces of furniture must be made to blend in with the color of the walls. Upholsteries and hangings must also be kept in a quiet key for the express purpose of making that rug the chief ornament in the decorative scheme.

The Asset of a Quiet Floor

THE unpretentious use of the mellowed, antique Oriental rug as a floor-covering, with all things else on an equally lavish scale, is of course, only for the wealthy.

Why build up an entire scheme of furnishings with respect to showing off the floor? It is easier, and more economical, to make the rug for the room than to have to make over the room for a rug. At last we have come to prefer neutral-colored walls for the room where many decorations must be displayed. So, too, we appreciate the decorative asset of a modest floor-covering and realize the handicap of the rug with a striking design, or too strong coloring, in any room where many furnishings must be seen.

Indeed, one of the very first principles of interior decorating

is that when any one feature of a room becomes, for any reason, so conspicuous that it calls undue attention to itself—stepping out of its place, as it were, in the *ensemble* effect—it ceases to be in good taste. Even the popular Chinese rugs, so wonderfully decorative when properly used—as in a hall, where there is little to conflict with their beauty and where there is nothing from which they in turn will detract—are losing in favor, as home-makers are beginning to see the distinction between the proper use and the abuse of Oriental carpets in the average home. We may no longer think, as we used to, that “an Oriental goes with anything”—for it does not. None know this better than those who prize most highly their treasures from the looms of the Far East and understand how to display them. For works of art, whether on walls, or cabinets, or floors, must be, in more ways than one, “handled with care.”

How One Choice Influences the Next

SO, going back to that baffling question, “where to start” with the decorating, or redecorating, of a room: First of all you will determine the relation of walls and floor-coverings, hangings and upholsteries to each other, deciding at the outset which had best be included in the background of the room and which shall be treated as its decoration. You must remember, too, that the stronger your decoration in any one feature, as in curtains or rugs, the greater the amount of quiet background you must have in order to preserve that simplicity of idea which is essential to every well-furnished room. And as every choice must be largely governed by some other choice already made, you may take whatever thing you have set your heart upon as a starting point and act accordingly. For instance, decorative wall-coverings are quite possible, if you desire them, but it

means that you must forego the added decoration of pictures and keep either your curtains or your furniture-coverings in a quiet key. Or rich design and a wealth of color in upholsteries or rugs you may have, if you wish, but at that moment you must give up your dreams of chintz. And seldom, if you are wise, will you handicap yourself at the start with design in the background of a room; especially where a room is small and many kinds of things, in many colors, must enter into it—as in a living room with its book-bindings, and lamp-shades, sofa-cushions and flowers—the plain wall in some neutral color is best, with also the quiet foundation of a plain floor.

Then as to working out a color-scheme, which should come after the question of design, though it is usually studied before. Again we find that it is largely a matter of relationships. Every color-note introduced into your scheme is influenced for better or for worse by the other colors in the room; consequently in combining colors, the quality of each is as important as its given name. Nature for example, used green with practically all of her flowers; but it is a yellow-green with the jonquil, a gray-green with the blue iris, an “apple green” with the white fruit blossoms, and still another green in the dark leaves of the violet. Even a landscape with precisely the same colors in its composition will take on vastly different hues under a gray or a blue sky.

Learning to “Key” Your *Color-Scheme*

SO, like Nature, we must learn to “key” our color-schemes to a given tone; to bring every part of a room into harmonious color-relationship with the dominant hue.* Take, by way of illustration,

* Good books to read on the fundamentals of color harmony are “Sanford’s Manual of Color,” Chapter I, page 17 of “Interior Decoration,” by Frank Alvah Parsons; “Color Problems,” by Emily V. Vanderpoel; and “Color Harmony and Contrast,” by James Ward.

a living room done in golden browns and tans; yellow, then, is the primary color which dominates your scheme, and so everything which enters into the background of the room must be tinged with the mother-tone. You cannot have a blue-white ceiling, for one thing, because it would always assert itself as a foreign element. Not that one need actually *see* yellow in the warm, creamy tone which would hold your ceiling in its proper place, but the flush of yellow must be there. Nor can you have pure-white woodwork, or gray-white, or any other than a decidedly yellow-white, or a brown wood trim in this particular kind of a brown room.

And, since yellow is here the password, you may not even hang blue-white curtains at the windows or they will fairly stare out from their uncongenial surroundings; these belong to your gray-and-white, or blue-and-white bedrooms. In the living room with golden browns you will make the sheer curtains a deep cream, or even an ecru tone, while the heavier hangings may be either a mellow brown, a part of the background idea, or, you may bring to a focus in them all the yellows of your color-scheme and make them a pure gold. Even an intentional bit of contrast may be introduced in hangings of red tinged with gold, or of chintz in many hues on a yellowish ground. But before curtains come floors, and the ground-color of either the floor or its covering must also be "keyed" to the rest of the room or the very foundation of it will be at odds with the walls.

The Well-Balanced Room

THERE is still one other fundamental principle in the handling of color which you must understand, and that is the importance of preserving a right state of balance between the color-values of the

CHARMING as is always the combination of creamy yellow and soft gray, in correct proportion, it is particularly happy in the accompanying hall where the note of rich blue in hangings and pottery gives emphasis to the decorative idea, while the rose tone of the flowers, real and in clintz, add a bit of warmth to the whole.

Note particularly that, despite the light cream colored walls, the wood floor has been wisely kept in a deep brown, as otherwise the dark hangings would have overbalanced the rest of the room.

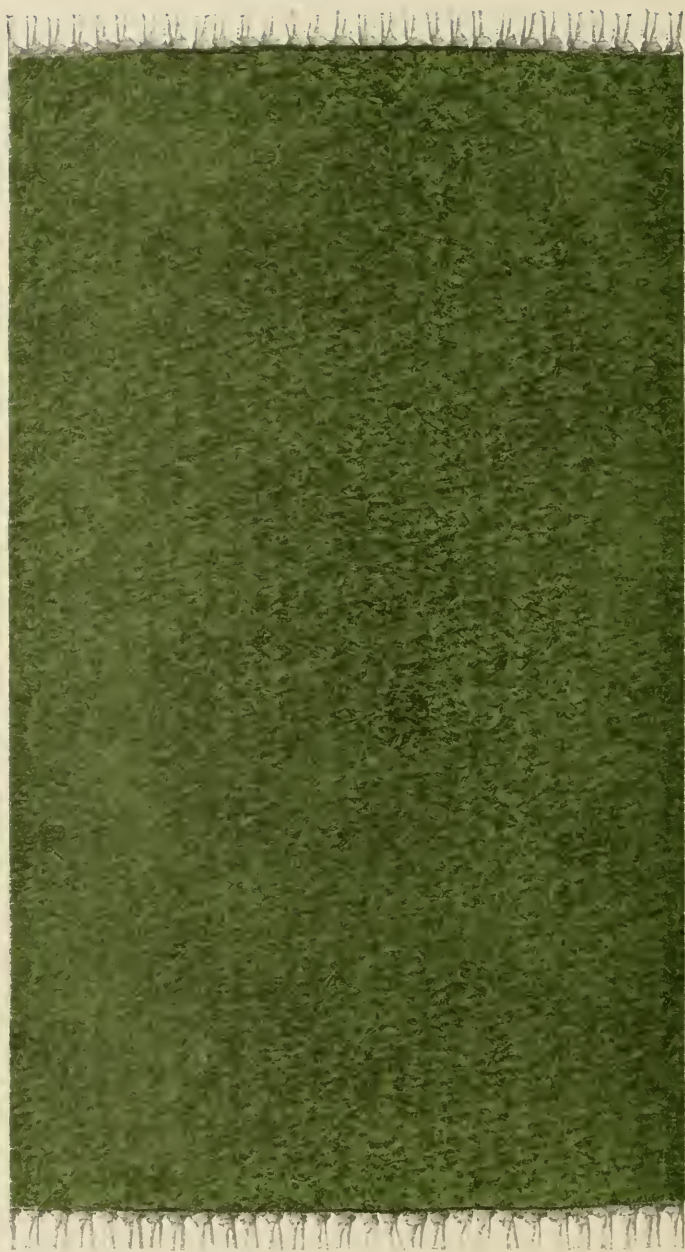


IN the accompanying illustration it is evident that the room owes its dignity largely to the wise choice of its floor-covering. This, while so simple and inexpensive in character, has the depth and richness of coloring necessary to "support" the decorative scheme; having, in other words, just enough weight in effect to give a comfortable foundation for the dark furniture. The warm yellow of the walls relieves this sombre tone of floor and furnishing, while the touches of orange and red make interesting highlights, and the blue portières lend just a note of soft contrast to relieve the eye.



various parts of a room. In other words, no one detail—ceiling, woodwork, walls or floor—must be made so assertive by the use of too much color, *even* an harmonious color, that it loses its relative importance in the scheme of the room. Woodwork may be lighter or darker than the walls but, except where a properly toned white has been used, it should show a pleasing gradation of color rather than a sharp contrast. Nature herself, spreading the blue heavens on high and planting the dark earth firmly under foot, established that good old rule which calls for a light-value ceiling, middle-value walls and a much heavier floor. As you can not improve upon the recipe you may as well accept it at once;—which means, remember, that the floor must have enough depth of tone to support the scheme of furnishing which rests upon it. The common mistake of leaving a wide margin of light wood between a small rug and medium-heavy walls results in a room that is sadly unbalanced and a floor that can never feel like a solid foundation for the rest.

It is not so long ago that interior decorating was thought to be of interest only to those whose means entitled them to pretentious homes. Today it is felt that every woman who has a home at all has a right to a beautiful home, since art and beauty do not necessarily entail costly furnishings and since good taste is emphatically not a matter of expense but rather of harmonious relationships. And there is no surer and safer means to this end than to start with the restful beauty of a quiet background; the simplicity of plain walls, the dignity of a plain rug on a plain floor.



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 112—Green, Medium



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 107—Brown, Medium



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 104—Blue, Medium



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 103—Gray, Light



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 101—Black



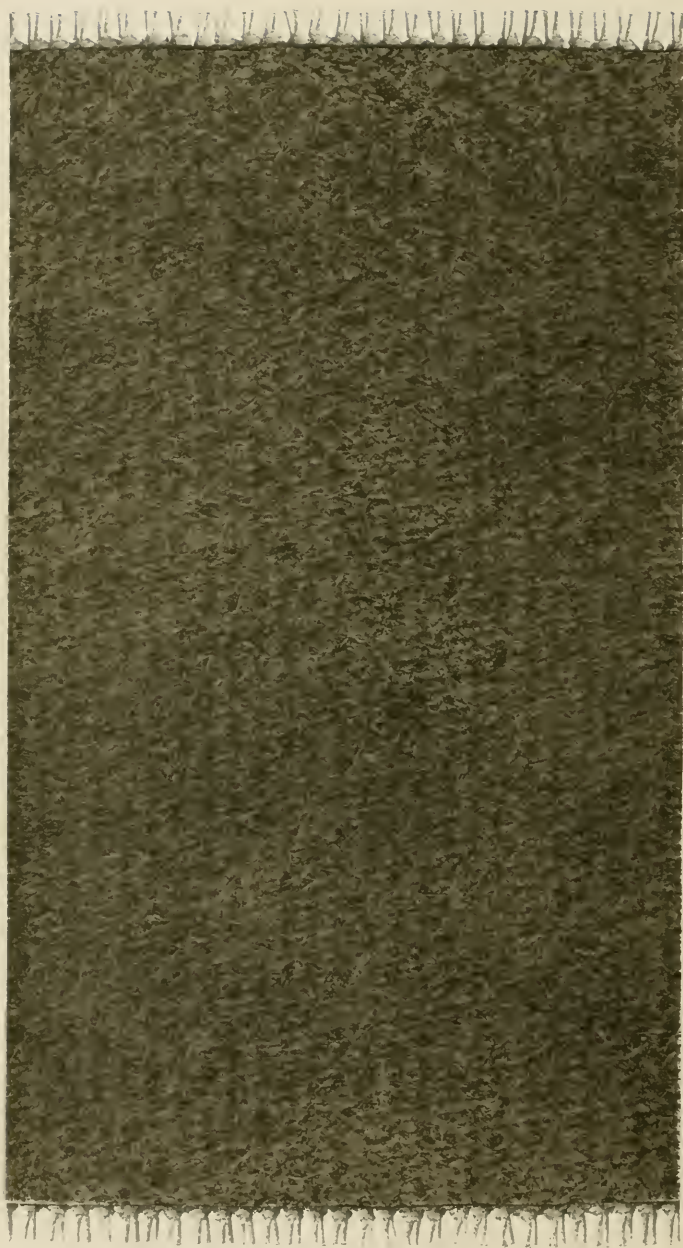
Klearflax Linen Rug No. 110—Taupe



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 109—Rose



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 106—Brown, Seal



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 102—Gray, Medium



Klearflax Linen Rug No. 111—Green, Dark

Klearflax Linen Rugs

Their Place in the Scheme of Things

KLEARFLAX LINEN RUGS occupy as distinctly individual a place in the rug field as do Wiltons, Axminsters, or Orientals. They are not a substitute for something similar or an improvement of some type you have known before. They have entirely original characteristics, possessing in the highest degree many virtues that some rugs do not possess at all.

Of course, their one outstanding difference is the fact that they are *linen*, and on this hinges most of their other qualities. But even here it must be kept in mind that as linen they bear to other forms of linen the same relation that as rugs they bear to other rugs—they are quite new and unique members of both families.

Linen is a fabric that possesses a peculiar affinity for color, and in Klearflax Linen Rugs this quality is strikingly manifest. Their beautiful effects, their harmony of tone, their purity of color shades are due quite as much to this basic fact—over which we have no control—as they are to the grade of dyes selected and the nature of the process employed—over which we exercise the greatest of care. Another point to be remembered about Klearflax Linen Rugs is that they show *true color*. Other pile rugs quite frequently vary materially in shade, depending upon the angle from which

they are viewed or the way in which the light falls upon them—a pink rug, as you look at it, for instance, might have a distinct rose shade in one corner. This is not the case here. Klearflax Linen Rugs under all conditions show the uniform evenness of true color. Both of these points make them rugs which can be used with the utmost confidence in any decorative scheme.

It was no easy task to make concrete the abstract conception of a linen rug. Some indication of the magnitude of the undertaking may be gleaned from the fact that experiments were conducted over a period of seven years before the first Klearflax Linen Rug was produced, and that approximately a million dollars in money was spent to carry on the work from its inception to its successful culmination. But finally, after special machines had been invented and built for some of the steps, it was possible to weave the strands of the flax plant into a thick, heavy and staunch floor covering. The idea that many men had had before but had never been able to work out, at last took tangible form in Klearflax Linen Rugs. With them your floors may now have all the charm that has been associated with fine linen from time immemorial.

The Romance of the Flax

OUT on the great plains of the Northwest, where the race of “super-farmers” have learned to do big things in a big way, the making of a Klearflax Linen Rug is begun. There in the late spring you may see huge gasoline or steam tractors, each drawing as many as a dozen plows, turning the soil a full eight inches deep and breaking from twelve to fifteen acres of ground a day. They need to be capable of doing their work on such a large scale, for approximately 2,000,000 acres are broken for flax alone each spring.

IN this play room for a child is shown the decorative use of Klearflax rugs when "harmony by contrast" is desired. The deep rose of the floor-covering gives the necessary warmth of color against the cool, neutral gray of the walls. Children instinctively love the pink and rose tones of the color scale and so the bright colors are well-chosen for the nursery; particularly when the wood floor is, as in this case, given a dark stain.



About eight weeks after the planting, or from the middle of July to the first of August, the flax plant bursts out into the bloom of its pale blue flower. Picture one of those vast fields of the Northwest at such a time, with acre upon acre as delicately tinted as an April sky! Verily, the charm of linen is the natural heritage of its early life's history.

Flax is one of the most successful crops for growing on freshly turned prairie sod, and regions where moderately cool, damp weather prevails during the summer, without sudden changes or unusual climatic conditions to prevent the growth of uniformly even flax, are best for its culture. American flax has been found by actual test to compare favorably with that produced before the war in the famous Courtrai region of Belgium—which is just another way of saying the linen in Klearflax Linen Rugs is as fine intrinsically as that in the best of Irish lace, for Courtrai ships most of its crop to Ireland. It is hardly necessary to add that we select with great care the section of the country from which comes the flax for these linen rugs. We must know that the flax is grown right, that the climate and soil are adapted for raising strong clean flax, as only the best can go into Klearflax Linen Rugs.

Flax reaches its maturity about eighty days after the planting, and the harvesting is done on a scale no less inspiring than is the planting. Sometimes as many as thirty-three horses are hitched to one harvester which can cut a swath twenty-five feet wide.

The average yield is about two tons to the acre, yet only a small percentage of America's annual production of 4,000,000 tons is used. It is a surprising state of affairs, when one considers the fact that we import each year about \$3,500,000 worth, and indicative that we are not yet taking full advantage of our natural re-

sources. Of the world's supply of flax, Russia has been producing about four-fifths.

The process of thrashing has advanced enormously over the old time method of hand wielded flails, and not the least interesting of the farmer's modern implements are the highly developed flax thrashing machines, specially designed to prevent doubling, breaking, or crushing the plant—a point that is immaterial when thrashing other grains, but vitally important in this case, a step in the manufacture of Klearflax Linen Rugs. Besides the flax, about eight bushels of seed are produced per acre. The seed is valuable for its use in the manufacture of linseed oil and of fodder cakes.

The harvested flax is sorted with special care, baled and sent by the growers to the nearest shipping point, and there loaded on trains for our mills at Duluth. On their arrival the bales are opened up and re-sorted. The inspection at this point is rigid and only flax of A-1 quality is passed along through the many intricate steps which now follow in rapid succession.

The preparation of flax for spinning is similar to the process of refining rare metal from the coarse ore. Each step decreases the bulk until at the end only one-fifth of the raw material is left. In every five cars in the train loads that reach the mill, there is enough fine flax to make only one carload of Klearflax Linen Rugs.

The first step in this refining process is the Breaking, which breaks up the woody Shives. The second is the Retting—the treatment which loosens these woody portions so that they may be readily removed. In olden times the flax was retted in one of two ways—by dry retting, which was retting by dew, and water retting, where the flax was immersed for a period of days in a slow-flowing river or brook. Our modern method is not only quicker but more exact.

The flax is now washed to remove the last trace of dust or resinous matter, after which it goes to the dye vats. By dyeing it in the raw state every particle of the linen is penetrated by the dye, and thus fading or unevenness of shade is prevented. The flax is then dried by fanning in a heated compartment where the temperature is closely watched to prevent baking. The care used in the drying process keeps the flax pliable and elastic, adding life and long wear to the rugs.

Its next appearance is in the carding room where it gets its first semblance of yarn, a form called Sliver. This Sliver is frequently weighed so that we may be sure that Klearflax Linen Rugs will always average four pounds to the square yard. The Sliver is put on special spinning machines that spin it into a tightly woven yarn, the warp yarn being twisted extra tight, and so made heavy and strong to aid in the close weave. The extreme tightness of the weave and the weight of the yarn are responsible for the way in which Klearflax Linen Rugs cling to the floor. The yarn is next transferred to spools and is ready for the looms.

This yarn is so heavy that unique machines have been built and patented by us to weave it. The heaviest, strongest types of looms, most of whose parts have been specially designed, are employed and require the services of two operators. It was the perfecting of these machines that so long delayed the appearance of a practicable linen rug, but in them the many problems have now been solved and Klearflax Linen Rugs are the result.

In the weaving of Klearflax Linen Rugs lies the secret of a quality that you do not find in other rugs. They always show *true color*, no matter the angle from which they are viewed. A high pile rug that is rose colored, for instance, might seem pink in spots. Manufacturers even go so far as to paste a warning notice on the back of their rugs. One maker puts it this way:

“Light and delicate carpets are liable to become soiled in wear, and so apparently to lose color. All pile carpets are also liable to shading, that is, to show light and dark patches, arising from unequal crushing of the surface, as in plush or velvet. No care on the part of the manufacturer can obviate these tendencies which are inherent in all pile fabrics.”

Thick and heavy as Klearflax Linen Rugs are, they do not have this drawback, and so far as we know, they are the *only* rugs that do not.

All that is left to be done after the weaving is the “finishing” by fine steel brushes, and the final treatment by heavy steam rolls. The finished rug is then inspected by experienced employees, and only when they pronounce it perfect is it allowed to leave the mill.

Such is the story of how Klearflax Linen Rugs are made. The work is started by machine—the great plowing tractors; then Nature has her unregulated way; then man’s machines do their task; and at last Nature reasserts herself in the evidence that crops out when the inherent virtues of linen make themselves manifest in the rug that lies on the floor. After their long journey from the breezy prairies of the great Northwest is ended, these Klearflax Linen Rugs stand ready to fulfill their real purpose by rounding out a romantic early history with a lifetime of usefulness in the many thousands of homes of their satisfied users.

The Desirable Features of Klearflax Linen Rugs

THIS brief outline of their manufacture has, we hope, given you an insight into what lies behind every Klearflax Linen Rug. And now a word about their many inherent virtues and the uses to which they can so satisfactorily be put.

Artistic, Decorative, Durable

GOOD taste now demands a harmony in decorative effects that our restless American life has so long lacked. So good taste is turning to Klearflax Linen Rugs. They are made in solid colors in a pleasing range covering every requirement, the sort of solid colors that people can live with year in and year out and never get tired of. A vividly colored rug of striking design may make a better first impression, but a rug of that sort, once its novelty is outworn, becomes an object more of distaste than of admiration. Klearflax Linen Rugs are rugs whose owners' satisfaction increases day by day.

The solid colors of Klearflax Linen Rugs are not only restful, but harmonious. A plain color rug is never out of place in any decorative scheme. Whether the room be furnished in Renaissance, Chinese, or Mission, you are safe in relying on Klearflax Linen Rugs. Its color range embraces Black, Taupe, Rose, Medium Brown, Seal Brown, Light Gray, Medium Gray, Medium Green, Dark Green, Blue—all rich, all soft, and all tasteful colorings.

Yet we cannot, all of us, make appearance the sole consideration. We have to think about the wear as well. Klearflax Linen Rugs, aside from their artistic and decorative value, have the quality of extreme durability. Everyone knows how linen will outlast other fabrics—the Egyptians used the linen for their mummy cloths; Philo, the historian who lived at Alexandria in 25 A.D., tells how the Jewish priests wore it as a symbol of immortality and incorruption—and Klearflax Rugs are linen. Not only are they pure linen, linen with nothing but the dye added, but they are a lot of linen—look at their thickness! Their long wear is a quality that you would naturally expect from both what they

are made of and the way they are made, and in actual use they more than live up to expectations. So think of Klearflax Linen Rugs as *durable*.

Because this durability is added to the wide range of soft harmonious colorings, Klearflax Linen Rugs are all year round floor coverings for every room in the home. They are ideal for the bed room, dining room, library, music and play room, sun parlor or breakfast room. Wherever in the home a good floor covering is required, a Klearflax Linen Rug will fill the need completely and will give perfect satisfaction.

Rugs have the call today over carpets, but either style is obtainable in Klearflax fabric. While the linen is heavy, it sews together well and both rugs and carpet can be made in any width or length desired.

Klearflax Linen Rugs are rich enough for the finest work and so economical as to permit of their use in any part of the home. They are coming into increasing favor among the wealthiest people and their price commands the interest of every woman of good taste and moderate means.

Thick, Heavy and Tightly Woven

KLEARFLAX LINEN RUGS are made of strand upon strand of downy flax, twisted into yarn and woven tightly into a thick, heavy rug that lies flat on the floor. Yet with all their weight and thickness, their weave is such that there is no "false surface" to be tramped down. Most rugs show footprints until they have been worn down considerably. The only footprints that show on Klearflax Linen Rugs are tracks from muddy shoes—and they are readily removed.

Easily Cleaned

KLEARFLAX LINEN RUGS are easily cleaned at home by plain sweeping or by vacuum cleaning. Because of the tightness of the weave, dust and dirt gather only on the surface and cannot work in, a virtue of Klearflax Linen Rugs that appeals strongly to the careful housekeeper.

Reversible

THINK of Klearflax Linen Rugs, too, as reversible. They carry the same pattern and color on each side, which means double wear. The best service is attained by frequent reversing.

Sanitary

KLEARFLAX LINEN RUGS, because they are so easily cleaned, are naturally in a more sanitary condition always than a rug which cannot be readily cleaned. But aside from that, Klearflax *stays* sanitary. The strands of flax are so tightly packed that dust particles cannot collect and work in as they do in a loosely woven, woolly rug. So think of Klearflax, particularly where there are children playing around on the floor, as *sanitary*.

Mothproof

KLEARFLAX LINEN RUGS are mothproof. No one has trouble with moths in a linen closet, and they get along no better on a diet of Klearflax.

In Conclusion

THINK of all the qualities of Klearflax—and then try and think of any other rug that combines them!

Wherever you want a rug that is restful in tone, wherever you want a rug that is durable, wherever you want a rug that is thick and heavy, there you want a Klearflax Linen Rug. In short, whatever you seek in a rug, be it for some particular color scheme, or some particular use, that you will find in Klearflax Linen Rugs.

For in Klearflax Linen Rugs is that rare combination: decorative value and utility.

